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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Extension Service  
Washington 25, D. C.

"QUO VADIS?"

This is a rather odd title for a talk. It came about because when asked to talk to you on the immediate future of 4-H Club work, I wanted something different from the conventional "What's Ahead?" or "What of the Future?" "Quo Vadis?" as you know, means "Whither goest thou?" It is the name of a very interesting and one-time very popular historical novel about the early Christians in Nero's time. The author is Henry K. Sienkiewicz, and the book was published in 1896. If I ask some very pointed questions in this discussion, charge it off to the title or to my manner, which many around here know and often are generous in forgiving. Nationally, you as a group of supervisors work together very closely, so at all times you should welcome any critical analysis of the problems and progress of 4-H Club work. Criticism based on a true analysis of facts cannot be anything but helpful and constructive.

Let me, at the start, congratulate you most heartily on the record you have helped 4-H Club work make. Never before have 4-H work and extension work generally enjoyed higher prestige. And 4-H Club work has contributed much to Extension's prestige. Never before has club work had so rich and influential a program. The enrollment, too, has increased so that today we can talk in terms of 1,800,000 members.

The record shows that there was an increase in club enrollment in every State except five and Alaska. Alabama leads the procession with 123,778 members--a gain of nearly 5,000 over 1946. Five other Southern States, namely, North Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas, also have more than 100,000 members enrolled. North Carolina gained over 10,000, but the State that made the biggest gain is Oklahoma with 12,133 more members than in 1946. Seven States, two of them in the North, have more than 50,000 members. Indiana leads in the North with 59,977.

The average for the United States is about one member out of every seven eligible rural boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 20. But there are 30 States that are below this average. If these 30 States had one member enrolled out of every seven eligibles, they would have 892,972 members--a gain of three hundred fifty-two odd thousand for these States. Then the United States total would be well over 2 million. To reach the goal of 3,200,000, we would need to enroll about one member out of every four eligibles. As a matter of fact, these 30 States had a total gain of only 66,000 members in 1946.

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Talk by H. W. Hochbaum, at Conference of State Club Leaders, National 4-H Club Camp, Washington, D. C., June 18, 1948.



The percentage of farm youth enrolled ranged from 41.74 percent for the high State to 6.28 for the low State. The corresponding figures for all rural youth were 30.69 for the high and 2.77 for the low. The average of all rural youth enrolled is about 13.5 percent.

Our funds have increased very considerably because of the Bankhead-Flannagan Act and the increased contributions from within the States. The total funds for extension work have now risen to \$58,463,459. Of this, the Federal Government contributed \$27,456,763. Funds raised within the States now total \$31,006,696. Thus, for the first time, the contributions from within the States exceed those of Federal origin.

Our records also show that for the 3,170 counties, there were employed as of March 31, 1948:

County agricultural agents . . . . .	2,963
Assistant county agricultural agents . . . . .	1,452
County home demonstration agents . . . . .	2,358
Assistant county home demonstration agents . . . . .	551
County 4-H Club agents . . . . .	440
Assistant 4-H Club agents . . . . .	87
Negro county extension agents . . . . .	725

The grand total of all extension employees, State and county, as of March 31, 1948, was 11,411.

Salaries, too, have risen, but perhaps not as much as hoped. The average in 1947 for county 4-H Club agents was \$3,067.26. There has been a heavy turn-over of agents and the difficulties of obtaining and holding persons qualified for county extension work have been tremendous. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1947, 134 county club agents and assistants were released or resigned. Forty-four were assigned to county agent or county home demonstration work.

What the directors have said and what they are proposing to do in increasing the volume of 4-H Club work generally is most encouraging. 1946 and 1945 were bad years because of the dislocations and the adjustments forced by the ending of war. The demands on extension workers have also been enormous since the war years. Farm people have desired information in many fields of subject matter, especially in the new fields of development and research that have been discovered since the war began. States were compelled also to begin or to emphasize extension work in making adjustments in farm programs, such as labor-saving machinery, better methods of marketing and distributing farm products, home food production and conservation programs, and farm and home planning as directed by the Bankhead-Flannagan Act. Much progress has been made in these as well as the older types of educational services. More work, too, has been done and considerable progress made in increasing the program of so-called older youth. Some 65,000 are now enrolled in regular organized groups.



The programs of the county agents and county home demonstration agents are overloaded because of the demands of farm people and because of needed cooperation with various Government agencies, and it may be doubtful whether the majority of county extension agents can give more time to 4-H Club work than they do at present. What is needed is more 4-H Club agents and assistant county agents, in addition, of course, to county home demonstration agents in the more than 750 counties now without such agents. There are many counties, at least over 1,000, without assistant agents or 4-H Club agents. We also think it reasonable to assume that where there is one assistant county agent in the county and no county 4-H agent, at least 75 percent of the time of that assistant agent should be given over to 4-H Club work.

However, the addition of 4-H Club agents to the county staffs may not mean necessarily that thereby larger enrollments will be obtained. In fact, four of the States that showed decreased enrollment in 1947 employed county club agents. One suspects that where a county club agent is employed, the other county extension agents largely discontinue their efforts in the club field. Our study shows that in 8 States which employ 102 county and assistant county club agents, the county agricultural and home demonstration agents report only 5 percent or less of their time given to 4-H Club work. It may be, too, that county club agents have been giving too much individual service to club members instead of training leaders and organizing the work generally. Anyway, the situation needs attention from State club leaders and directors. Personally, I want to see the number of county club agents increased.

Will we reach that goal of 3,200,000 members by 1950? We still have about 1,400,000 to go. We made about  $11\frac{1}{2}$  percent gain in 1947 over 1946. To make the goal, we shall have to make something like 43 percent of that goal in 3 years. We'll have to travel if you take that goal seriously. Branch out. Try to reach more urban and suburban boys and girls. The girls and boys living on part-time farms, especially, need to be attracted to 4-H Club work. And above all, let's find out how we can hold boys and girls longer in 4-H work. What can we add in the way of new projects? How may we get out of the rut of a too-static program? How shall we organize the older teen-agers so that they will be associated and work more closely together with young people of their own ages?

The problem of holding members longer in 4-H Club work has been before us a long time. Don't you think the time has come when this needs some really earnest and concentrated study? I should like to see a committee appointed to develop such a study.

I think we can reach the goal. Extension has more money and something like 2,200 more county extension workers than before the Bankhead-Flannagan Act was passed. It is going to be easier from now on to employ more personnel. We have a big supervisory force--a total of 572, and about 58 Negro supervisors besides. Of that number, the largest grouping is the supervisory force of county club agents--something like 216. We estimate, too, that there are about 175,000 local leaders--nearly 1 for every 10 members.



Extension has more money, more personnel, and enjoys greater confidence of the people than ever before. What is holding us back? How good a job of public relations and promotion are we doing in 4-H Club work? Is it sporadic instead of continuous? How good a job are we doing in finding and training local leaders? Are we reaching parents of eligible young people effectively? How good a job are we doing in organizing the whole proposition?

Do supervisors of 4-H Club work have time to join with editors and other extension workers in planning and maintaining a good, sustained public relations program? We know that they are all extremely busy. But how do the leaders use their time? Is there a need for a time-work study of what supervisors do? Are they spending too much time on the less important details? And what a maze of detail some leaders cover. Cannot more time be found for the most important things that really build up club work, like leader training and a well-designed public relations program?

Last year, at your meeting here, I talked with you about the need for a sustained educational program and outlined some detailed suggestions for planning such a program. Everything said then holds, I think, today. The need for such a program is greater now than ever before. And not merely for the purpose of increasing our enrollment.

I do not mean to give the impression of constantly harping on increased enrollment. But I am such a firm believer in all that 4-H Club work means--all that it does for young people--that I should like to see several more millions enrolled under the 4-H banner. We need to keep abreast, too, of the competition, the encroachment of other agencies. The latter problem is not growing any less acute. Indeed, I think the situation calls for serious attention by the Sub-Committee on 4-H Club Work and the National Committee on Extension Organization and Policy.

And beyond the matter of increasing enrollment, though tied in very closely with it, is the need for building a much wider national understanding of 4-H ideals and work and much greater active support. For the next few years, we have before us the enormous job of developing Nation-wide interest and financial support in building a great permanent 4-H Camp and meeting place here. This, plus the drive for more members, calls for a well-planned, dynamic educational campaign with the added need of emphasizing good public relations in county, State, and Nation.

What do we mean by public relations? One definition is "that public relations is the formulation and maintenance of policies designed to win and hold the good will of each of the groups or publics important to an enterprise and carrying to these groups through advertising, publicity, and personal contact the story of these policies.

"If public relations as defined is putting an institution in harmony with the public interest and making that fact known, it demands of the public relations director an understanding of both the institution and different aspects of social life; economic, governmental, historical, cultural, psychological, and sociological.



"Essentially, public relations is human relations. Whether focused at the grass roots or at highly sophisticated levels, the man in charge of the public relations program seeks to tap any resource of experience, any skills, processes, or methods which may prove helpful in reaching his objectives.

"The public relations counselor is one who analyzes expertly the needs and desires of the public and of his client for the purpose of interpreting their common interests to the best advantage of both parties." 1/

The last point is especially important if we recognize that public relations involves more than telling the public. Good public relations starts when those in charge first of all try to find out what the public thinks about the special enterprise, activity, or product. This often is a very salutary process, and we get opinions of people which may radically change the concept of how we should proceed in winning public good will and support. I think one of the recent examples of a good public relations start is the study made in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Ohio, of what encourages parents to support 4-H Club work. This little study points out in very definite terms the great job we still have to do to bring local leaders in closer touch with parents and with the job of organizing and directing 4-H Club work. Let me repeat that good public relations involves far more than telling people about the merit and success of any special program. It means getting in intimate touch with a lot of people we should try to reach and ask first rather than tell. Telling can come later when we readjust our thinking and our programs, our promotional effort, after we know how our people feel and think and what they know about 4-H Club work.

Whom shall we reach? The list can be made to be a large one. But no educational campaign and public relations program can be as successful as it should be until such a list is worked out. In my opinion, parents come first, then --

People in public life.  
 School officials.  
 Teachers.  
 Ministers.  
 Political officers.  
 Daily and weekly press, farm papers,  
 and magazines.  
 Organizations of any kind that have any part  
 in the welfare of county and State.  
 Rural young people, and, of course, potential  
 leaders.

We do not omit --

The officers and staff of the college.  
 The whole Extension Service.  
 The college information bureaus.

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1/ From Public Relations Directory and Yearbook.



We can include --

- The boards of county commissioners and other county officials.
- Any local or State-wide sponsoring committee or organization that supports Extension work.
- County-wide citizens' organizations.
- Specialized groups.
- State and county farm organizations.
- Businessmen's groups.
- Women's groups.
- Labor organizations.
- Educational associations.
- Civic and service organizations.
- Health and medical groups and officers.

This list will grow and vary in the several States as we get closer to the actual planning and setting up of an educational and public relations program.

How shall we plan such a program? At the college headquarters, I think we need to set up, first of all, some sort of committee representing college and extension work--something like what I mentioned last year. This would, above all, include representatives of the college staff, supervisors of county extension agents, and some specialists and, of course, the extension editor. This committee would work for organizing over-all, suggestive plans, which can then be outlined and modified in various State and county meetings of people representing some of the groups mentioned above.

What shall we use? Every medium, every agency we can harness. Remember the objectives are not won by a single flurry of meetings and press notices. Not today, in these highly competitive times, when innumerable concerns and agencies are trying to get the eye, ear, and mind of the public. Not by two or three highly featured club activities during the year. Good educational and public relations work is an everyday job of trying to win interest and action. The more devices skillfully used, the more contacts made with people and groups, the greater the success. We often fail in extension to reach desired objectives because the educational work is so sporadic, so intermittent. We make a little splurge, do a little telling, and are so sure of the worth of our own program that we incline to think everybody knows about it. This is not so, and much of our effort may be misdirected because we do not know what the people feel and think. We do not know what they know about the particular problem and how it may affect them. Good teaching starts with the recognition on the part of the learner of his own, not your problem, dissatisfaction, need. We have to develop skill in interviewing people, in studying their situations and needs, because this knowledge may radically change not only what we teach but how.

So, 4-H Club leaders in developing a public relations program should learn to make brief surveys of what a representative sample of people in many walks of life know, think, feel, and recognize of their own situations, needs of the young people, and the welfare of the community. Much skill can be gained in studying the method of pollsters who now are so great a part of the American scene. Local leaders, parents, older club members will help in making such surveys. The place of club work, its methods, and the objectives sought, all will play a part in this survey. Don't be afraid of tackling neutral, uninformed, or even antagonistic persons or groups. Then with the facts obtained, your committee will be ready to revise the program, the points to



be emphasized and methods of obtaining good will and support from a wide circle of people.

Certainly, when it comes to this, you will leave no avenues of help unused. You will want to win the most active support and the very great help that the extension editors and the college radio leaders can give you. You will want to use every appropriate medium and use it skillfully. You might include:

- The press--weekly and daily.
- House organs, State and local.
- Radio--direct broadcasts by prominent people, extension workers, club members, and local leaders as well as transcriptions.
- Motion pictures, slide films, and kodachromes of State, local and national interest.
- Exhibits in local store windows, at meetings and conferences.
- Demonstrations.
- Meetings of people you are trying to reach with talks by club members and leaders.
- Circular letters to a large mailing list.
- Bulletins and circulars.
- Local leader training and talks in schools, churches, businessmen's meetings, and elsewhere.

And don't forget action. Sometime in the process of this educational work, people you make contact with should be led to act, to express themselves in favor of club work, to become local leaders, organize clubs, to obtain members to speak in favor of club work, to solicit funds.

Does this seem like a big job? Surely it is. But many of you must already be doing it. Think of the rewards ahead in the glorious work you are leading. Think of the several million more young people as well as parents and other oldsters you can influence. You may have to reorganize your work, throw out some of the time-consuming details or have someone else manage them. But I need not tell you that you are building a monument--a great one to 4-H Club work and all it means. God bless you and may great success be yours and all associated with you in this most noble work.



